

EARMARK REFORMS UNDER THE DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS

“In 2007, the new Democratic leadership in Congress began to address these abuses with a series of [earmark] reforms that I was proud to have helped to write. We eliminated anonymous earmarks and created new measures of transparency in the process, so Americans can better follow how their tax dollars are being spent.” – President Barack Obama, 3/11/09

Today, House Democratic Leaders announced new earmark reforms to help ensure that taxpayer money is being spent effectively on worthy projects benefitting local communities, including:

- 1. Increased Review by the Executive Branch:** After a Member requests an earmark, the appropriate Executive Branch agency has 20 days to review the project to ensure that the earmark is eligible to receive funds and meets goals established in law.
- 2. Earmarks for For-Profit Companies Subject to Competitive Selection:** For any earmark intended to be directed to a for-profit entity, the Executive Branch will be required to ensure that the earmark will be awarded through a competitive bidding process.

In January, at the beginning of the 111th Congress, House Democrats continued their commitment to strong accountability and transparency by passing additional earmark reforms, including:

- Requiring all Members’ requests for earmarks to also be publicly disclosed on their website with an explanation of why it is an appropriate use of taxpayer money (Beginning with FY10 bills)
- Requiring even earlier public disclosure, by requiring all earmark disclosures to be made public the same day that the subcommittee reports the bill (Beginning with FY10 bills)
- Reducing earmarks by more than 43 percent below the FY06 level. For the FY10 bills, earmark funding levels will be reduced to 50 percent below the FY06 level.

At the beginning of the 110th Congress, House Democrats passed strong earmark reform. The new rules included:

- Requiring Members to disclose the earmarks they secure in bills
- Requiring Members to certify that they and their spouses have no personal financial interest in the request
- Prohibiting trading earmarks for votes
- Requiring committees of jurisdiction and conference committees to publish lists of the earmarks contained in the reported bills, unreported bills, manager’s amendments, and conference reports brought to the House Floor; a Member may make a point of order against consideration of any rule that waives this requirement

At the beginning of the 110th Congress, Democrats enacted a 1–year moratorium on earmarks in order to implement a reformed process.